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IN THE CLAIMS:

1-22. (Cancelled)

23. (Currently Amended) A production system including a production line being a series of a plurality of mounting apparatuses each of which has a parts supply unit, the
5 production system comprising:

an NC management apparatus that is connected with each mounting apparatus via a local-area network and acquires and stores therefrom NC data used for operating each mounting apparatus; and

a scheduling apparatus that generates a production schedule from inputted
10 production design data and transmits a generated production schedule to the NC management apparatus via the local-area network, wherein

the NC management apparatus generates, for each mounting apparatus, NC data including production parameters for each mounting apparatus that is required to perform production according to the production schedule, and obtains, for each mounting apparatus,
15 differences between stored NC data that had been most-recently stored prior to the generated NC data and generated NC data from the production schedule, and outputs the obtained differences, and the NC management apparatus further retrieves inspected NC data that was generated in past.

24. (Previously Presented) The production system of Claim 23, wherein
20 the NC management apparatus strings the stored NC data.

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25. (Previously Presented) The production system of Claim 24 including a plurality of production lines each of which is used to mount parts onto a circuit board, and each production parameter includes a production line ID, a production equipment ID, an effective date, a parts number ID, and an update date.

5 26. (Currently Amended) The production system of Claim 25 further comprising a display means that displays the differences obtained by the ~~difference-obtaining means~~ NC Management Apparatus.

27. (Previously Presented) The production system of Claim 26, wherein the NC data contains an NC program showing a parts mounting position, a parts arrangement program, a board program, and a parts library showing conditions for mounting parts.

28. (Currently Amended) An NC data management method for use in a production system including a production line being a series of a plurality of mounting apparatuses, each of which has a parts supply unit ~~and means for storing NC data of items previously produced on the~~ production line including production parameters for each mounting apparatus, the NC data management method comprising:

a production schedule acquiring step for acquiring a production schedule, for operating the mounting apparatuses to provide an output of production items from the production line, from a scheduling apparatus;

20 an NC data acquiring step for acquiring NC data used for operating each mounting apparatus from the acquired production schedule ~~including production parameters for each mounting apparatus~~; and

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a difference obtaining step for obtaining, in terms of each production parameter for each mounting apparatus, differences between ~~[[an]]~~ the acquired production schedule of NC data and stored NC data of the same type of items that was used by the parts supply unit for supply of parts.

5 29. (Previously Presented) The NC data management method of Claim 28, wherein the production schedule is generated for each version of each production item, each production schedule showing a version of a production item, the NC data acquiring step acquires NC data of a version, and the difference obtaining step obtains differences between the production schedule
10 and currently held NC data, in terms of each production parameter of a version of the currently held NC data.

30. (Previously Presented) The NC data management method of Claim 29, wherein the production line is used to mount parts onto a circuit board, and each production parameter includes a production line ID, a production equipment
15 ID, an effective date, a parts number ID, and an update date.

31. (Previously Presented) The NC data management method of Claim 30 further comprising a display step that displays the differences obtained by the difference obtaining step.

32. (Previously Presented) The NC data management method of Claim 31, wherein the generated NC data contains an NC program showing a parts mounting
20 position, a parts arrangement program, a board program, and a parts library showing conditions for mounting parts.

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33. (New) A method for configuration management and control of the numerical controlled (NC) machines in a circuit board production line, the steps of the method comprising:

preparing a production plan for using NC machinery;

generating NC data for controlling one or more NC machines for the circuit board

5 production line according to the production plan;

incorporating data from a parts library with the NC data to create a NC data management file;

producing circuit boards pursuant to the production plan based on the NC data stored in the NC data management file;

10 receiving feedback of parts data from the circuit board production line acquired during the manufacturing process to provide inspected NC data;

comparing the data in the parts library with the inspected NC data and generating a difference file; and

updating the parts library with the inspected NC data fed back from the circuit board

15 production line to provide an updated NC data management file, whereby production plans are generated and executed using timely and accurate production line configuration information based on configuration changes stored in a difference file to enable future production of circuit boards.

34. (New) The method of claim 33 wherein the NC data management files are fed to

20 a computer aided design (CAD) system.

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35. (New) The method of claim 33 further including the step of presenting the data from the parts library and the data from the management file to an operator for deciding whether to accept the NC data.

36. (New) The method of claim 35 further including the step of editing the NC data
5 management file.

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